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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SENV](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CZECH GREEN PARTY CHAIR AND ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER MARTIN BURSİK TO WASHINGTON

REF: A. PRAGUE 146

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 158

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons
1.4 b+d

[1](#)1. (SBU) Martin Bursik, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Environment, and Chairman of the Czech Green Party, will visit the U.S. May 8-12. He will attend the UN Commission on Sustainable Development before traveling to Washington for consultations on May 11. These meetings are expected to cover missile defense and environmental issues.

[1](#)2. (C) As discussed reftels, Bursik is a relatively new face on the Czech political scene, but his party yields influence well beyond its size. The Greens are the new force in Czech politics: more centrist than their western European counterparts, and -- at least under Bursik's leadership -- more open to compromise on fundamental issues, including nuclear power. Bursik is a young dynamic leader who has transformed the Green Party and brought it into Parliament and government for the first time. Bursik is engaging and well-informed, speaks excellent English, and is generally well disposed toward the United States.

[1](#)3. (C) The Green Party is divided on missile defense. In discussions with the Ambassador, Bursik has demonstrated a continued willingness to be flexible on MD. But he has avoided speaking out on the issue recently. Instead, his party's Deputy Chair, Ondrej Liska, has voiced the Greens' concerns about the bilateral nature of the U.S. proposal, possible opposition to MD within the U.S. Congress, and doubts about whether it is advisable or even necessary to pursue a European MD site at this time. Bursik has also had to tread carefully on the question of a referendum on MD: his party supports the idea of a more flexible general law on referenda (and in fact this week put forward a draft law on this for cabinet approval); Bursik himself has criticized Communist-led efforts to craft an unwinnable referendum solely on MD.

[1](#)4. (C) The Czech government realizes that Bursik's personal opinion on MD is important. The Czech embassy has arranged a lunch for Bursik to discuss MD with senior USG officials. In addition to analyzing the potential link between the U.S. system and NATO, Bursik will be particularly interested in discussing the position of the Congress regarding the future of the U.S. BMD system, including the third site. In the early 1990s Bursik interned for Representative McDermott (D-WA) and the two have remained in touch since (Bursik will meet him for breakfast on May 11).

[1](#)5. (SBU) While he will be obliged to discuss MD during his visit, Bursik's real passion is the environment and he will be more focused on his planned meetings at EPA and State/OES.

These meetings offer an opportunity to convince an influential European Green of U.S. commitment to confronting climate change. During a December meeting with Bursik's predecessor, Petr Kalas, the Czech side proposed a memorandum of understanding to cover cooperation in areas in which the U.S. excels, such as alternative energy and energy saving or clean technologies. The Greens are actively promoting the use of biofuels, and have submitted a bill to require 2% of all gasoline to be biofuel. Kalas is still an advisor to Bursik and post believes the Czechs, although they have not raised it since, may still be interested in greater cooperation in these fields.

16. (U) Post has nominated two of Bursik's assistants for FY-08 International Visitors Programs on alternative energy, renewable and new policy initiatives. One, Ales Kutak, was just promoted to Deputy Environment Minister. The other, Daniel Vondrous, is Secretary to Bursik and head of his team of advisors.

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